

Message Text

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64

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 IO-11 SAM-01 (ISO) W

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R 281305Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9575

INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

UNCLAS CAIRO 1103

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, EG, TS, XI

SUBJECT: BOURGUIBA INTERVIEW

1. CURRENT ISSUE OF CAIRO WEEKLY ROSE AL-YUSUF CONTAINS
INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA IN WHICH HE EXPRESSED HIS
VIEWS ON SAHARA PROBLEM AND MADE STRONGLY PRO-SADAT STATEMENT.

A. SAHARA. BOURGUIBA IS QUOTED AS SAYING UNITY OF MAGHRAB IS
REMOTE. REFERRING TO SAHARA AS "MOROCCAN DESERT", HE NOTED
BOUMEDIENNE HAD ANNOUNCED AT ARAB SUMMIT THAT ALGERIA HAS NO
AMBITIONS IN "MOROCCAN DESERT". BOURGUIBA HAD CONSEQUENTLY
THOUGHT PROBLEM COULD BE SOLVED BY MOROCCAN, MAURETANIAN AND
SAHARAN INHABITANTS. MOROCCAN DESERT, HE CONTINUED, IS
SOUTHERN PART OF MOROCCO BORDERING ON MAURITANIA.
RESTORATION OF RULE OF TWO ISLAMIC COUNTRIES IS MUCH
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BETTER THAN CONTINUING UNDER SPAIN. THIS SIMPLE VIEW,

HE COMPLAINED, CAUSED GREAT UPROAR, AS IF TUNISIA HAD ADOPTED HOSTILE STAND TOWARD ALGERIA. BOURGUIBA FOUND THIS "STRANGE" AFTER ALL THAT HAS OCCURRED BETWEEN TUNISIA AND ALGERIA, TWO COUNTRIES WHICH HAD COOPERATED IN BAD TIMES AND GOOD DURING BATTLE OF ALGERIA. "SAQIYYA SIDI" (SIC) INCIDENT "IS NOT UNKNOWN TO US." BOURGUIBA REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED HIS HOPE BROTHERLY FEELINGS WILL PREVAIL, BASED ON "GRATITUDE" AND GOOD NEIGHBORLINESS.

B. EGYPT. BOURGUIBA ASKED, IN RELATION TO SINAI II, WHAT MORE CAN WE REQUEST FROM EGYPT, WHICH HAS FOUGHT FOUR WARS, SHOULDERED ALL BURDENS, AND BOOSTED ARAB MORALE. IT IS ARAB DUTY TO UNDERSTAND EGYPT'S POSITION AND LEAVE GOE TO TAKE CARE OF DOMESTIC ECONOMY. THERE ARE ACTUALLY PEOPLE WHO CRITICIZE SADAT AND SINAI II. THIS IS REGRETTABLE. I DO NOT ALLOW MYSELF TO CRITICIZE A MAN WHOSE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY HAS BEEN DRAINED AFTER FOUR WARS; BEFORE CRITICIZING HIM, I WOULD PLACE MYSELF IN HIS SHOES.

C. ISRAEL. BOURGUIBA SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE ISRAEL'S MENTALITY WILL CHANGE IN GENEVA, ESPECIALLY AFTER ISRAEL CHALLENGED EVERYONE, INCLUDING US, BY NOT ATTENDING UNSC DEBATE ON ME. HE SAID HE WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT GENEVA AND BEST THING TO DO IS "ADHERE TO LAW" AND PREPARE FOR 100 YEARS OF WAR.

2. COMMENT: BOURGUIBA'S STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT SADAT AND HIS FOREIGN POLICY COMES AT OPPORTUNE TIME FOR BELEAGUERED EGYPTIAN MFA, WHICH IS SMARTING FROM FAILURES IN ITS ARAB POLICY, LEBANON IN PARTICULAR. EILTS

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